

Kentucky Literacy Link

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We invite your questions and your contributions of ideas/lessons that work. E-mail those to rebecca.woosley@education.ky.gov, and we will include them in *Literacy Link* to connect teachers across the state by sharing insights, bright ideas and best practices.

Issues of Interest

The Latest Updates

-  **Program Reviews:** Schools selected to be a part of the Program Review pilot should be notified by early February. When the Program Review pilot begins in the spring of this year with the selected schools, **all** Kentucky schools will have access to the Program Review tools and process. This will allow all schools to begin planning well in advance of the 2011-2012 accountability cycle. In addition, there will be an electronic mailbox set up so all schools can give feedback about the tools and the process.

Conferences in 2010

-  **KCTE/LA Conference** – The theme of the 74th annual conference, February 19-20 in Louisville, is *Open the Box*. Visit <http://conference.kcte.org/> for registration information and details about conference speakers.
-  **KRA Conference** – *Leading for Literacy* is the conference theme. Conference participants will gather at the Lexington Hyatt and Conference Center Oct. 28-30. Mark your calendars and visit <http://www.kyreading.org/Preview.aspx> for a conference preview or to submit a proposal to present. Proposals are due May 21.

PD Opportunity

FREE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR KENTUCKY ELEMENTARY TEACHERS

Elementary (K-5) teachers are invited to apply for the Kentucky Reading Project (KRP), a yearlong, graduate-level course in reading instruction that includes a two-week summer institute, four follow-up visits and a coaching visit by a KRP director.

Each public state university serves as a site for KRP, and 25 teachers will be selected for each site. An additional KRP will be held in southeastern Kentucky so that teachers who do not live near a public university will have an opportunity to attend KRP.

Response to Intervention (RTI) mandates that all children first receive excellent classroom instruction before moving to the intervention tiers. KRP provides free professional development to teachers in the best practices in reading instruction, helping to ensure that all children have access to the high-quality classroom instruction that constitutes the first tier of RTI.

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KRP (continued)

Teachers who are selected for KRP receive a \$200 stipend, in-state tuition for three hours of graduate credit and approximately \$200 in books and materials.

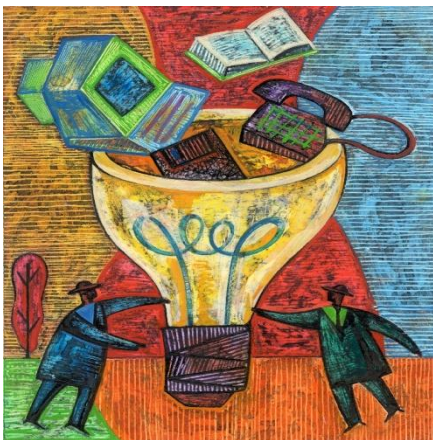
Applications and information are available on the Collaborative Center for Literacy Development Web site at www.kentuckyliteracy.org, or you can contact Cary Pappas at cary.pappas@uky.edu.

High-Quality Teaching and Learning

Beginning in August 2009, *Kentucky Teacher* magazine, published August-December, featured an article in each issue that focused on a different component of High-Quality Teaching and Learning.

- August – Learning Climate
- September – Classroom Assessment and Reflection
- October – Instructional Rigor and Student Engagement
- November – Instructional Relevance
- December – Knowledge of Content

Those articles can be accessed online at <http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/HomePageRepository/Publications/Kentucky+Teacher+2009-2010+School+Year.htm>.



21st-Century Skills

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills includes critical thinking in the list of the essential skills today's students need in order to be empowered for success in their future endeavors. One way teachers can incorporate higher order thinking skills into instruction is by engaging students in the processes of thinking about their own thinking.

"Reading is thinking" is a fundamental literacy premise expressed by many. Engaging students in lessons that show them how to think about their own thinking, and providing time and opportunities for self-reflection, develops students' metacognitive skills.

In order to provide the context for students to develop their thinking, students need to read texts that invite both comprehension and critical thinking. Kathryn Au, president of the International Reading Association, encourages even kindergarten and 1st-grade teachers to select and read picture book stories aloud to students, so the material will foster discussion and help children understand from these early experiences "...that reading is about understanding and making meaning with text...." Further, in *The Right to Literacy in Secondary Schools*, Baynard Woods echoes Au's assertion that we need to ask students to read texts that will foster thinking and discourse if we intend to help learners develop their own thinking skills.

Strategies:

- Model your own thinking about text by using the *think-aloud* strategy to explicitly *show* students how you think about your own thinking as you read the text aloud to them. (They need to be able to see the same text as you read.) When students witness how (and hear you explain why) you draw inferences, make predictions, revise your predictions, describe what you visualize, ask clarifying questions and make connections to prior knowledge, you make your *thinking* visible to them.
- Include opportunities in instruction for students to articulate their thinking orally with other students in small groups, as well as with the whole group. This discourse aids their comprehension by revealing their thinking and the thinking of others. During this process, students may revise their thinking because of what they learn from each other. It also gives the teacher a way to formatively assess student thinking

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21st-Century Skills (continued)

and inform instruction immediately. Ron Ritchhart (2002) recommends providing tools to support students' thinking and discourse during even informal discussions. Those tools become the guidelines and provide the direction to help students have meaningful discussions about their thinking.

- One the best ways for students to "see" their own thinking is when they read with a pen in hand and then reflect on their writing. Schmoker (2006) summarizes the importance of this practice. "For all our talk about the importance of higher-order thinking, we continue to overlook the fact that writing, linked to close reading, is the workshop of thought – with an almost miraculous effect on students' critical capacities" (p.64).
- Use the Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) instructional pattern to guide students to independently think about their own thinking and apply those skills to a variety of texts and genres. Doing so helps transfer the ownership of the thinking and the subsequent learning to the students.

References

Au, K. (2009). Providing powerful comprehension instruction. *Reading Today*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association. 27 (2).

Woods, B. (2009). The right to think: giving adolescents the skills to make sense of the world. In S. Plaut, ed. *The Right to Literacy in Secondary Schools: Creating a Culture of Thinking*. New York, New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University.

Ritchhart, R. (2002). *Intellectual Character: What It Is, Why It Matters, and How To Get It*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, a Wiley Company.

Schmoker, M. (2006). *Results Now: How We Can Achieve Unprecedented Improvements in Teaching and Learning*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.



Turning the Page

Sharing a Literacy Strategy

We know that competent readers have a constant, silent dialogue with the text as they read. Kylene Beers, past president of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), cites research that validates the impact of using the *think-aloud* strategy as a metacognitive technique to foster reader independence.

Scaffolding Read-Aloud Instruction – a direct, explicit technique:

- Select and pre-read the text you will use to model your thinking during the think-aloud. Note: It's helpful to annotate the text with your thoughts before you present the think-aloud to students.
 - Provide students a copy of the text to read silently as you model the think aloud.
 - Explain to students before you begin that you will stop periodically and think out loud about what you are reading. Note: Be sure to establish what cue you will use so they will know when you are stopping to show them your thinking.
 - As you are reading aloud, stop often and talk about what you are thinking at that point in the text. For example –
 - ✓ Articulate what questions you are asking mentally.
 - ✓ Let them hear you make inferences and predictions.
 - ✓ Show students your thinking when you come to an unfamiliar word.
 - ✓ Let them hear the connections you are making to text.
 - ✓ Explain what you visualize as you read.
 - As you are showing students what you are thinking, it is also helpful to jot it down on a
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Sharing a Literacy Strategy (continued)

transparency so they can also see your thoughts. Note: To save time, create an annotated transparency of part of the text when you do your pre-reading preparation.

- After you have modeled how you think aloud a few times, move to a new section of the text and allow students to practice the same process in pairs.
- Give students several opportunities to use the same process on other texts.
- Model strategies for students with several texts and with a variety of genres.
- As a part of your formative assessment of student learning, listen to students as they articulate their own thinking and adjust instruction to address their learning needs.
- Follow up by asking them to think about how using this strategy has impacted their reading skills.

Beers, K. (2003). *When Kids Can't Read What Teachers Can Do*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Generous amounts of close, purposeful reading, rereading, writing, and talking, as underemphasized as they are in K-12 education, are the essence of authentic literacy.

Schmoker, Mike (2006). *Results Now*.

Suggested Reading

Keene, E.O. (2008). *To Understand: New Horizons in Reading Comprehension*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

In this text, Keene focuses on what comprehension really means. The strategies she recommends give teachers ways to enhance students' literacy skills by igniting their interest and engaging their thinking.

Lenski, S., Wham, M., Johns, J., & Caskey, M. (2007). *Reading and Learning Strategies: Middle Grades through High School*. Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co.

This is a user-friendly book that offers content strategies and example lessons to show teachers how you can integrate literacy strategies into your lessons without sacrificing your content goals. Not only is this text easy to use and filled with strategies, but it is also accompanied by a CD-ROM with more strategies you can load right on the hard drive of your computer for easy access.





Check out these links ...

<http://dww.ed.gov/>

This U.S. Department of Education's *Doing What Works* Web site is a treasure trove of research-based resources for not only literacy pre-K-12, but also for high-quality teaching, math and science, turning around low-performing schools and more.

<http://www.k8accesscenter.org/index.php/category/universal-design/>

This site contains a wealth of resources to support language arts, math, science, teaching and learning, and more. Resources at the site address computer-assisted instruction, ELL, differentiated instruction and other things. In addition, the site provides professional development modules and materials to cover the resources on the site.

<http://www.readwritethink.org/>

This site, sponsored by NCTE and IRA, has been advertising the groups' new design. The site continues to offer great literacy resources and professional development material in a new user-friendly format. Check out the ways this site can help you bring 21st-century skills into your classroom.

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